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**The situation in the Middle East**

**Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

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## Identical letters dated 3 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to the inexactitude and distortions of facts that characterize the letter sent to you by the representative of Israel with regard to the incident that neutralized an Israeli armoured bulldozer that crossed the Blue Line into Lebanon.

The bulldozer was well inside Lebanese territory and not at all on the other side of the border, as stated in your report, dated 20 January 2004, on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). That bulldozer — like many others — crossed the Blue Line into the minefields that the Israeli army itself planted all along the border inside Lebanese territory, prior to its eviction in 2000.

The report on UNIFIL describes the demining action that is being taken to clear areas in South Lebanon from hundreds of thousands of sophisticated landmines that Israel planted and that, as stated in paragraphs 17, 18 and 27 of the report, "are now largely concentrated along the Blue Line because other sectors have been cleared of mines".

Lebanon has repeatedly asked UNIFIL to try to obtain plans of those minefields from Israel, but without success. The minefields are close to the Blue Line inside Lebanese territory and ought to be cleared or destroyed. The Israeli army maintains a set of corridors among the minefields, and the role of its armoured bulldozers is to sweep the way in those corridors to prepare for the incursion of troops and vehicles into Lebanon. All those Israeli military activities are in breach of the Blue Line, as are the air raids and the constant violations of Lebanese air space and territorial waters.

The letter of the representative of Israel alludes to the presence of the Lebanese resistance as terrorists. The components of that resistance are Lebanese citizens living in the southern part of the country, trying to recuperate their land

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from 22 years of Israeli occupation and from landmines planted by Israel throughout those years. They are often shot at by the Israeli army just for being there, on their own lands.

Since the Israeli army was evicted from South Lebanon, its dreams of continuing to control the region have not faded. After 22 years of bloody occupation, the Government of Israel has no right, no legitimacy, to speak about Lebanese sovereignty when Israeli warplanes constantly violate Lebanese air space. How could the Israeli settlers be terrorized by peaceful Lebanese farmers? How could the Israelis, with all their armed forces and their arsenal of sophisticated weapons, be terrorized in general?

As usual, the Israeli Government is terrorizing other populations and accusing them, in turn, of terrorism. One has only to see what the Israeli army is doing in the occupied Palestinian territories to know who the real terrorists are and how the bulldozers destroy hundreds of Palestinian homes on top of their inhabitants. **Terrorism has no face, no identity and no religion.**

Lebanon has consistently respected international law, along with all the decisions of the Security Council. Lebanon asked to renew the mission of UNIFIL, which we esteem and respect very highly, for another six months. This should be an occasion to thank contingents for their brave work. It is not an occasion to be exploited by the Israeli delegate for further provocations, accusations and hatred towards Lebanon.

To restore peace and security in the region, the Israeli Government should refrain, or be forced to refrain, from being aggressive towards other nations and peoples, from occupying their lands and from destroying their lives. Israel should seriously consider the Arab peace initiative that was approved by all the Arab leaders on 27 and 28 March 2002 in Beirut, instead of discarding it the next morning as its Government did. That Arab peace initiative is still relevant.

The present letter is in answer to the Israeli allegations. I would be grateful if you would circulate it as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 37 and 156, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sami **Kronfol**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative